

WATER QUALITY TEAM RPA 132 WORKGROUP MEETING NOTES

December 9, 2003

**National Marine Fisheries Service Offices
Portland, Oregon**

1. Introductions and Review of the Agenda.

Mark Schneider of NOAA Fisheries, WQT co-chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting, held December 9 at the NOAA Fisheries office in Portland, Oregon. The meeting was facilitated by Robin Harkless. The meeting agenda and a list of attendees are attached as Enclosures A and B. Please note that some of the enclosures referenced in these meeting notes may be too lengthy to routinely attach to the minutes; please contact Kathy Ceballos (503/230-5420) to obtain copies.

2. Lower Snake/McNary TDG Fixed Monitoring Stations.

Joe Carroll led this presentation, titled “TDG Forebay Fixed Monitoring Station Review and Evaluation for Lower Snake River Projects and McNary Dam,” noting that it is taken from the draft Lower Snake River report, which is available upon request from Schneider or from the WQT website. Please refer to this document for full details. Carroll touched on the following major topic areas:

- FMS purposes
- The role and function of the FMS (RPA 132) subcommittee
- RPA 132 Lower Snake River 2003 tasks
- McNary Dam MCQO TDG and water temperature, May 1-July 20, 2003 (graph)
- Little Goose forebay TDG and water temperature data, April 1-July 1, 2003 (graph)
- Lower Granite forebay TDG and water temperature data, April 1-July 1, 2003 (graph)
- McNary Dam TDG FMS and RPA 132 alternative TDG stations (map)
- McNary Dam alternate monitoring station temperature, May 1- July 20, 2003 (graph)
- McNary Dam forebay thermal profile, May 1-July 1, 2003 (graph)
- McNary Dam TDG saturation MCQO and MCNFBBRZP1, May 1-July 20, 2003 (graph)
- McNary Dam TDG saturation MCQO and MCNFBMFSP1, May 1-July 20, 2003 (graph)
- Ice Harbor Dam alternate TDG monitor station temperature, April 25-June 15, 2003 (graph)
- Ice Harbor Dam forebay thermal profile, April 25-June 15, 2003 (graph)
- Ice Harbor Dam TDG saturation IHR and IHRDTD, April 25-June 15, 2003 (graph)

- Little Goose Dam forebay temperature profile, April 16-June 20, 2003 (graph)
- Lower Granite Dam forebay thermal profile, April 25-July 15, 2003 (graph)
- Lower Granite Dam TDG saturation LWG and LWGFBNL, April 16-July 20, 2003 (graph)
- Decision-making factors related to FMS stations
- Future considerations: McNary Dam: reduce the number of stations to one and position it at 15 m deep either on the tip of the navigation lock guide wall or on a buoy located upstream of the powerhouse near the MCNFBRRZP1 station; Ice Harbor: relocate the fixed monitor to nearer the upstream tip of the navigation lock guide wall at 15 m; Lower Monumental: relocate the fixed monitor to near the upstream tip of the navigation lock guide wall at 15 m; Little Goose: relocate the fixed monitor to near the upstream tip of the navigation lock guide wall at 15 m; Lower Granite: reposition the existing instrument which is already located on the navigation lock guide wall to a depth of 15 m.

Finally, Carroll provided the following conclusions, in a slide titled “The 2004 Transition Period:”

- Since the study conducted during 2003 was not exhaustive of every possible set of environmental conditions or variables that may be introduced by different water/weather years, a transition period is recommended prior to any permanent relocation of stations.
- During this transition period, testing should continue similar to the 2003 effort, but only at the depths and locations described above.
- The alternate TDG stations should be limited to the navigation lock guide wall locations tested in 2003 for the Snake River projects and at McNary continue testing the upstream BRZ site and add a guide wall station further toward the upstream tip of the wall.
- The transition period would extend through 2004 and be followed with a reevaluation regarding permanent relocation of the forebay FMS stations.

In the course of this presentation, Carroll answered a variety of clarifying questions and comments. Again, please refer to the full text of Carroll’s presentation from the WQT website for additional details. In relocating any of these monitors, are we presenting any kind of a problem to the project operators? Schneider asked. Without speaking for the operators, I would have to say that the answer is no, Carroll replied, other than a few minor logistical changes.

We talk about exceeding the standards, but those standards are based on biological criteria, observed Margaret Filardo. The 120% number came about from a desire to see some TDG dissipation, and to avoid undue biological impacts on the migrating populations. If the problem we’re having with forebay monitors is that they are unduly influenced by local environmental conditions, are they truly a necessary part of compliance? Filardo asked.

All of that is true, replied Jim Britton, but if a standard needs to be changed, then somebody needs to step up to the plate, do the necessary research and apply to the states for a change. I don’t think anyone is talking about changing the standards, Filardo replied – I’m talking about changing the way we monitor for compliance with the standards.

Ultimately, it was agreed that this topic leads directly into the next agenda item; Harkless asked that the group wait to hear this presentation before re-engaging on the larger compliance monitoring issue. Jim Adams noted that the Corps is hoping to receive any WQT comments on the Corps' 2004 water quality plan of action at today's meeting, particularly comments on any significant issues. We'll then have a month or so to resolve those issues, he said, noting that there are significant differences between the 2003 and 2004 plans. Most WQT members said they will provide comments to Adams by next week.

Harkless reminded the group that the purpose of today's meeting was to look at the Corps' 2004 monitoring recommendations, comment, and begin to develop a unified set of WQT comments. She noted that there will be further opportunity to develop comments over the next few weeks, but that all comments will need to be provided to the Corps by the time of the WQT's January 13 meeting.

3. Bonneville Tailrace, Camas/Washougal, Warrendale FMS.

David Benner led this presentation; again, the full text is available via the WQT website. He touched on the following major topics:

- Background: used hourly TDG and spill data from Bonneville TWP1, CWMW and WRNO. Date ranges: April 10-July 11, April 11-August 14, 2003. Accounts for lag time in TDG to CWMW and WRNO.
- Lag time to CWMW and WRNO (table)
- Relation between the average of the 12 highest hours of TDG at BON TWP1 and the average spill at Bonneville over those hours (accounting for lag time), 2002 and 2003 data (graph)
- Relation between the average of the 12 highest hours of TDG at WRNO and the average spill at Bonneville over those hours (accounting for lag time), 2002 and 2003 data (graph)
- Relation between the average of the 12 highest hours of TDG at CWMW and the average spill at Bonneville over those hours (accounting for lag time), 2002 and 2003 data (graph)

One of the conclusions this information leads me to is that the Corps' recommendation, presented at the last WQT meeting, that the Warrendale station be moved to Bradford Island, looks pretty good, said Schneider. My concern is that if you move that station to the Bonneville tailwater, and that becomes the limiting station, you will be restricting spill, Filardo observed.

The recommendation made last time was to move the Warrendale station to the Bonneville tailwater exit channel, said Harkless – can we take comments on that recommendation? In response to a question from Gary Fredricks, Carroll said the point of this recommendation is to find a site that is more representative of the spill and TDG conditions the fish are experiencing at Bonneville. But you're managing based on Camas/Washougal, not Warrendale, said Fredricks. The purpose is to refine our evaluation of the water coming down from the dam, in support of the TMDL and other ongoing processes, Carroll replied.

My concern with the fixed monitoring stations is that some are located in the spill areas and some are not, Paul Pickett observed – I don't understand why we have that inconsistency. From Washington's perspective, the change to the spill program that would result from this change in monitoring site location seems minimal, while we should get more consistent and representative numbers from the Bradford Island station. From Washington's perspective, it makes sense to make that change, Pickett said. Russell Harding agreed, saying that, in Oregon's view, the shift to the tailrace makes sense. Like Paul, I see no difficulty in shifting the monitor from Warrendale to Bradford Island, Harding said; Oregon would be open to discussing any changes to the spill program arising from that move – say, spill to 122%, rather than 120% – that the salmon managers believe is warranted, Harding said.

Does anyone have strong objections to moving the Warrendale site? Harkless asked. The Fish Passage Center does, Filardo replied. If your objective is to manage to the spill level, she said, then I object to Camas/Washougal as well. To me, this move means that we will see a reduction in the spill program, and while Oregon has indicated a willingness to discuss measures to offset that, Washington has not. So the Fish Passage Center objects to the move if the Camas/Washougal station is going to continue to be used? Harkless asked. Correct, Filardo replied. NOAA Fisheries would object to that as well, said Fredricks, as would CRITFC, unless the Camas/Washougal issue is addressed. So moving the station to Bradford Island would be acceptable to the Fish Passage Center as long as the Camas/Washougal station is not used for spill management? Schneider asked. That's correct, Filardo replied.

David Wills said the Fish and Wildlife Service concurs with this comment. Dave Zimmer said Reclamation has no strong opinion on this issue. Pickett clarified his earlier statement, saying that Washington has no objection to moving the Warrendale station to Bradford Island, but does not feel that such a change is imperative.

Filardo clarified the salmon managers' frustration: that the goal for the Bonneville spill program, 80% FPE, is already not being met; adding more stringent limitations on spill would only leave us farther from achieving that standard, she said. Schneider said NOAA Fisheries agrees that moving the Warrendale station to Bradford Island would be acceptable to NOAA Fisheries only if the Camas/Washougal gauge is dropped.

That would require convincing the Oregon Commission that such a change is warranted, said Schneider – that's not going to happen in a month, but if they do agree prior to the 2004 spill season -- say, by February or March -- that would be acceptable.

What about the Corps' Lower Snake/McNary recommendations, to use 2004 as a "transition year," Harkless asked – any strong objections? None of the WQT members raised strong objections to the Corps' Snake/McNary recommendations for 2004.

4. The Dalles, John Day FMS.

The WQT agreed with the Corps' recommendation to move the John Day FMS to the navigation lock.

5. Next WQT Meeting Date.

The next Water Quality Team meeting was set for Tuesday, January 13. Meeting summary prepared by Jeff Kuechle.